

Talking with kids about

# SEX AND LOVE





## SEX AND LOVE

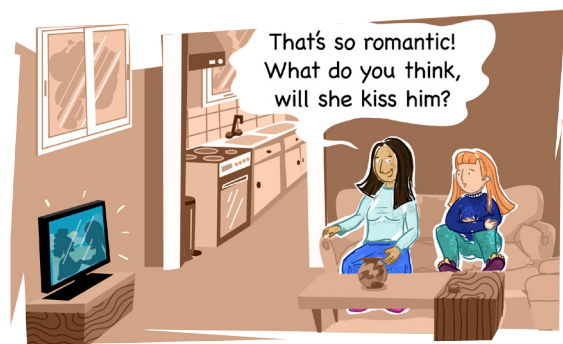
Your daughter Marlene (13) appears to have changed in the last few days: she daydreams, withdraws frequently into her room, and receives many messages on her cell phone. By chance you overhear a phone conversation between your daughter and her best girlfriend where Marlene raves about a boy in school. You are inclined to believe that Marlene's changed behavior has something to do with her infatuation with that boy.

Many parents believe that discussing sexuality with adolescents might lead to an awakening of desires and needs among their teens. Such talks could encourage one's teenagers with ideas which they then might want to try out. However, this is not the case. Adolescents have many questions of their own and frequently think about their bodies and sexuality. Moreover, scientific studies have shown that well-informed adolescents have less unprotected sex, fewer unplanned pregnancies and that, in general, their first sexual intercourse occurs at a later age.

*How would you deal with your daughter? Select one of the options and go on reading on the indicated page:*



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**Some important tips for a conversation about sex with teenagers**

- Take your children seriously and listen carefully to their wishes, fears and uncertainties. This reinforces a good relationship.
- Show your daughter or son that you have a sympathetic ear for them, particularly concerning the subject of sexual relations.
- Be supportive and encourage your children so that they will not be easily coerced into anything. Although most of their friends allegedly have had sex already; nowhere are exaggerations more rampant than when it comes to sexual experiences.
- Reassure your child: Sexuality is more fulfilling with increasing maturity and experience. This may alleviate stress and reduce peer pressure concerning a child's first sexual experience.
- Discuss contraception with your teenagers in a timely manner. Condoms are the only contraceptives that prevent both unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Your daughter or son might perhaps enjoy reading an age-appropriate sex education book, a brochure, or a novel about the topic of first love and puberty.

**How do I discuss sex with my child? Here you can find additional information/materials/videos:**

"Would you like some tea?" What does consensual sex mean? Entertaining video explanations

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=16&v=fGoWLWS4-kU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=16&v=fGoWLWS4-kU)

Book recommendation

There's No Place Like Home... for sex education (Mary Gossart) Tips and tricks for discussions and sex education at home.

Everything you need to know about sexual health and sex education:

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-pacific-southwest/local-education-training/parenting-programs>

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/parents/sex-and-sexuality>

Films from Planned Parenthood covering all topics of sex and sex education

<https://www.youtube.com/user/plannedparenthood/featured>

Animated films for teens and parents about the subject

<http://amaze.org/>

Recommended reading about the subject of sex education

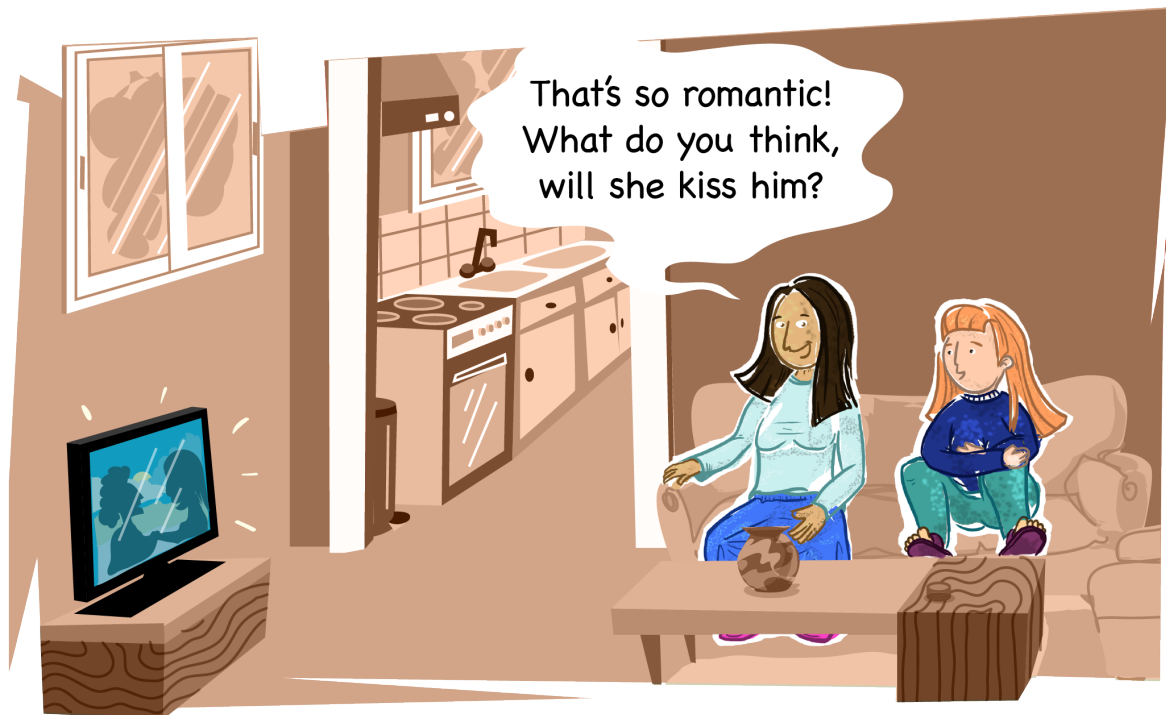
<http://birdsandbeesandkids.com/sex-education-resources-parents-kids>



Threats, moral lectures and insinuations are not conducive to promote a trusting climate for an open dialog between you and your daughter. You must get used to the fact that your daughter begins to lead an independent life during puberty, which also includes a love life. Even when you find it difficult to show your daughter that you are always there for her during the turbulent times of puberty with its mood swings, your support is precisely what the pubescent teenager needs. Remain in the background and always be ready for chats. Encourage your daughter to listen to her own feelings as to when she is ready to engage in sex for the first time.

Many parents's concerns about the sex life of their children are unnecessary. Although some of the adolescents experienced their first sexual intercourse at an earlier age ("10% had sex before age 14"<sup>1</sup>), a third of the 17 -year olds had not had sexual intercourse. Moreover, the assumption is wrong that sex and love for adolescents no longer belong together. More than ever, today's juveniles desire to have their first sexual experience with a person they trust and for whom they have strong feelings. Furthermore, many adolescents are fully aware of the possibility that even «first time» intercourse activities may result in a pregnancy and, therefore, they use safe contraception. Nevertheless, in talks with your teenager you should deliberately address the topic of contraception and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. What kinds of contraception methods are there? What are their advantages and disadvantages? Give your children an opportunity to inform themselves as well, be it through counseling services, a doctor's visit, or trustworthy internet sites.

Trust your daughter or your son, and don't feel disturbed by vague fears and preconceptions about «today's youth».



Take advantage of appropriate opportunities to involve Marlene in a conversation. A film or music might provide an impulse, or you could take advantage of a shared activity, like doing dishes, going for a walk, or gardening to talk about topics that may elicit certain inhibitions.

Perhaps Marlene finds it easier to talk about the world of emotions by a character in a film rather than her own. Ask your daughter questions, without interrogating her, in order to find out the extent and, most importantly, the veracity of the information she has acquired. It could well be that this may give her the courage to ask questions about sexuality that may have preoccupied her for a long time. If a trusting personal conversation ensues, do not hesitate to express your opinions and state your points of view about the subject. Here you can impart your own values and attitudes to your daughter, but refrain from moralizing or deprecating other attitudes, however.

The topic of birth control as well as sexually transmitted diseases should be addressed in a gentle but timely manner. Although many adolescents are aware of possible consequences of this kind from sexual intercourse and proactively use contraception, a need for pertinent information often remains.

**„Talking with kids about sex and love” is based on the following references:**

<sup>1</sup> Gnielka, Martin. *Über Sexualität reden...Ein Ratgeber für Eltern zur kindlichen Sexualentwicklung zwischen Einschulung und Pubertät*. Broschüre, ed.: Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung Deutschland, 43.

Gnielka, Martin. *Über Sexualität reden...Ein Ratgeber für Eltern zur kindlichen Sexualentwicklung zwischen Einschulung und Pubertät*. Broschüre, ed.: Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung Deutschland.

Marinka, Claudia. 2016. «Eltern, bleibt gelassen!» *Das Schweizer Elternmagazin Fritz und Fränzi*, Dezember. retrieved 29.11.2017.

<https://www.fritzundfraenzi.ch/erziehung/sexualitat/eltern-bleibt-gelassen>

Landolt, Claudia und Claudia Marinka. 2016. «Wenn die Sexualität erwacht.» *Das Schweizer Elternmagazin Fritz und Fränzi*, Dezember. retrieved 29.11.2017.

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National Parent Teacher Association, Chicago. 2002. *Talking with kids. A Parent`s Guide to Sex Education*. retrieved 20.03.2019.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED470698.pdf>

Public Health Service Wales and Family Planning Association, London. 2012. *Advice Sheet 1. How to talk to your children about sex and relationships*. retrieved 16.03.2019.

[http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/documents/485/factsheet1\\_howtotalkchildrenaboutsre.pdf](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/documents/485/factsheet1_howtotalkchildrenaboutsre.pdf)